

2. Rejection Under Section 112:

Claims 1-20 stand rejected on the grounds that they are indefinite under Section 112 for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 has been amended to make it consistent with the specification.

Claims 2-3 have been amended to make them consistent with claim 1.

Claim 13 has been amended to correct the word "interior" as suggested. It has also been amended to indicate that there are components to which the sensors are connected to overcome the Examiner's rejection based on a failure to recite structure relating to whether the vehicle is in a secure position.

New claims 21-25 have also been added.

3. Conclusion:

For all of the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-6, 8, 10, and 12-25 are in condition for allowance, and earnestly requests that a Notice of Allowance be entered in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
J. John Shimazaki  
Registration No. 37,236

DICKINSON WRIGHT PLLC  
1901 L Street, N.W.  
Suite 800  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
202-457-0160  
202-659-1559 (fax)  
**Date:** December 17, 2002

## VERSION OF CLAIMS SHOWING CHANGES

Please cancel claims 7, 9 and 11.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (amended) An interlock circuit for use in a vehicle having a battery, a gear shift lever, and a parking brake, to prevent the operation of said vehicle when an auxiliary device [having an ON/OFF switch] is turned on or is in an operational state, [wherein said auxiliary device is prevented from operating unless said vehicle is in a secure position,] said circuit comprising:

a microprocessor; and

a plurality of sensors connected to said microprocessor for sensing various parameters, said sensors [including] comprising a sensor for sensing when said auxiliary device is turned on or is in said operational state, a gear shift lever sensor for sensing when the gear shift lever is in the park position, and a parking brake sensor for sensing whether the parking brake is engaged, wherein the gear shift lever [may be] is prevented from being shifted out of park when said auxiliary device is turned on or is in said operational state, or when [only if] the parking brake is engaged.

2. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 1, wherein the auxiliary device is a lift device operable through one of said vehicle's doors, and wherein one of said sensors senses whether the door associated with said lift device is open, wherein the gear shift lever is prevented from being shifted out of park if either the parking brake is engaged or the lift door is open.

3. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 2, further comprising a solenoid circuit connected to said microprocessor and said gear shift lever to prevent said gear shift lever from being shifted out of park if either the parking brake is engaged or the lift door is open.
4. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 2, further comprising a visual display for displaying the status of at least one of said plurality of sensors, said visual display being connected to said microprocessor.
5. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 4, wherein said visual display comprises at least one light-emitting diode.
6. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a circuit for operating said microprocessor through the vehicle's battery, said circuit comprising a step down voltage regulator connected between said microprocessor and said battery.
7. (canceled) The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 2, further comprising a circuit for operating said microprocessor through the vehicle's battery, said circuit including a step down voltage regulator connected between said microprocessor and said battery.
8. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a filter circuit provided between at least one of said sensors and said microprocessor for isolating said microprocessor from any voltage spikes.
9. (canceled) The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 2, further comprising a filter circuit provided between at least one of said sensors and said microprocessor for isolating said microprocessor from any voltage spikes.

10. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 8, wherein a filter circuit is provided between each of said sensors and said microprocessor.

11. (canceled) The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 9, wherein a filter circuit is provided between each of said sensors and said microprocessor.

12. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 1, wherein said gear shift lever sensor is a digital or analog sensor.

13. (amended) An [interior] interlock circuit for use in a vehicle having a battery, a gear shift lever, and a parking brake, to prevent the operation of a lift device having an ON/OFF switch operable through a door of said vehicle, wherein said lift device is prevented from operating unless said vehicle is in a secure position, comprising:

a microprocessor;

a plurality of sensors connected to said microprocessor, said sensors being connected to various vehicle components and capable of sensing various conditions relating to whether said vehicle is in a secure position; and

a circuit connected to said microprocessor and said lift device for preventing the operation of said lift device unless at least one of said various conditions is present.

14. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 13, wherein said various conditions are taken from the group consisting of: whether the gear shift lever is in park, whether the parking brake is engaged, whether the vehicle's ignition is ON, whether the lift device is ON, and whether the vehicle's door through which the lift device operates is open.

15. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 13, wherein the lift device will not operate unless all of said various conditions are met.

16. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 14, wherein the lift device will not operate unless all of said various conditions are met.

17. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 13, further comprising a visual display for displaying the status of said sensors.

18. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 13, further comprising a filter circuit provided between at least one of said sensors and said microprocessor for isolating said microprocessor from any voltage spikes.

19. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 18, wherein a filter circuit is provided between each of said sensors and said microprocessor.

20. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 13, further comprising an auxiliary device operable only when said gear shift lever is in park.

Please add the following new claims:

21. An interlock circuit for use in a vehicle having a battery, a gear shift lever, and a parking brake, to prevent the operation of said vehicle when an auxiliary device is turned on or is in an operational state, said circuit comprising:

a microprocessor; and

at least one sensor for sensing when said auxiliary device is turned on or is in said operational state, wherein said circuit is adapted to prevent said gear shift lever from being shifted out of park when said auxiliary device is turned on or is in said operational state.

22. The interlock circuit of claim 21, wherein said circuit has a parking brake sensor for sensing whether the parking brake is engaged, wherein the gear shift lever may not be shifted out of park when the parking brake is engaged.

23. The interlock circuit of claim 21, wherein the auxiliary device is a lift device operable through one of said vehicle's doors, and wherein a sensor senses whether the door associated with said lift device is open, wherein the gear shift lever is prevented from being shifted out of park if the lift door is open.

24. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 1, wherein the auxiliary device is a lift device operable through one of said vehicle's doors, and wherein one of said sensors senses whether the door associated with said lift device is open, wherein the gear shift lever is prevented from being shifted out of park if the lift door is open.

25. The interlock circuit in accordance with claim 1, wherein the gear shift lever is prevented from being shifted out of park if the parking brake is engaged.

DC 71195-10 81591